

Graduation by TheMikeWheelers (jasongracefully)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Future Fic, It was supposed to be angsty, but I didn't want to give myself an existential crisis, is this angsty?, so who knows how it turned out

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler

Relationships: Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-10-31

Updated: 2016-10-31

Packaged: 2022-04-01 21:29:17

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,045

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

On Mike's graduation day, him and El sneak back into Hawkins Middle School to Mr. Clarke's old classroom.

Graduation

Almost 6 years since her first visit to Hawkins Middle School, El sat on the bleachers of the school's shared football field with the high school.

Karen Wheeler and Joyce Byers were by her sides, cheering and applauding along with her. It was graduation day. Today was the day all her friends were officially leaving high school.

Chairs were set up on the field for each person in the class. Their principal stood on a makeshift podium in one end zone, calling each student up one by one to give them their diploma.

Will was the first of her friends to be called up. El clapped as she watched her adoptive brother take those steps out of school. Twelve years of classes and tests and studying, and he had gotten his diploma.

He shook the principal's hand and walked back to his seat, a grin peeling across his face.

Joyce was crying next to El. Her baby boy had just graduated, and she couldn't keep her emotions in.

Dustin was called up shortly after, followed by Lucas. El cheered for them as she watched them too take those few steps away from all the school they'd ever known.

Mike was one of the last people to be called up. Karen was standing up, yelling and taking pictures. Holly was behind El, jumping up to try and see. El shouted as her boyfriend got his diploma.

The ceremony didn't last much longer after that, a quick ending speech by the principal, and it was over.

Karen and Joyce rushed to go find their sons, El walked behind them, smiling when she saw her 4 best friends laughing by the goal post.

She pulled Mike into a hug when she saw him, whispering a simple "Congratulations."

The moms all insisted on taking hundreds of photos. El was pulled into them, she put her arms around her friends while Mike put his cap onto her. They smiled as the flash went off, and continued to smile for the next billion photos their parents requested, until finally Karen suggested they go try the free-snacks offered in the cafeteria.

El nodded along until she heard a quiet, "Follow me," behind her, and promptly felt Mike's hand grab hers.

They snuck out within the crowd before anyone else could notice. Mike pulled her to behind the bleachers, she was still wearing his cap, when he gave her a quick peck.

"They're keeping the middle school unlocked."

And so they ran off. The middle and high schools were close, separated only by the football field. So they got to the back door of the school, and walked into the gym.

El stared around the empty room. She remembered her first time being in there, six year ago. She was scared and cold and didn't have the slightest idea what the next six years would bring.

She'd been in that room many times since then, all the school functions and her favorite, the Snow Ball. But every time the memories would rush back to her.

"Where do you want to go?" She asked Mike, knowing exactly the answer.

"Mr. Clarke's room?"

They walked to the old room. Beakers and test tubes scattered all around the room, it was unusual seeing the teacher's desk empty, but school was over now.

They sat at the two front desks and Mike looked around, El noticed the nostalgia on his eyes.

"When was the last time you were here?"

"Two weeks ago. Dustin and I came to visit Mr. Clarke. Thanked him

for getting us into science, being a supportive teacher, all that. He asked a lot of questions about college,” Mike started to ramble.

College. The topic that set a pit in El’s stomach. Every time someone brought it up she felt her heart drop at the thought of all her friend’s leaving.

Mike noticed her discomfort. “College isn’t gonna be that bad. Lucas and I are gonna be at school together, only an hour away. And Dustin’s gonna be pretty close too. Will might be a little harder to visit, but he’s your family, you’re gonna see him all the time.”

El refused to meet his eyes, mumbling, “I wish I could be with you guys. I wish we could all be together.”

“We are gonna be together, promise. You can take the train to visit every weekend, or I can come down. And we’re gonna go see Dustin and Will during all the holidays and we’re gonna go see each other ev-”

El shut him up with a kiss, not wanting to hear any fragile attempts to make her feel better.

Mike pulled away and kept going, not going to let her stay upset.

“You’re gonna be getting your GED in a couple of months, maybe you can even apply to a school nearby or something? El after you do that you can get out of Hawkins, you can come to school with me or go somewhere new or anything, you won’t be tied down to one place anymore.”

“Maybe I want to be tied down to one place, if that place is where everyone I care about is,” El looked down.

Mike was silent for a few minutes until he finally spoke up again, “I can’t promise that nothing is going to change, but I can promise one thing. You’re always going to have me, and I’m going to have you. It’s always gonna be us, okay? Me and the guys are gonna visit Hawkins all the time, we have to, we got you and and our families and our entire lives here. Things are gonna change, but we’re always going to stick together. Even if things are different we’re always going to be

friends. And even if things aren't the same with the guys, nothing is going to change between us. Even if we don't see each other every day, nothing's going to change because we're gonna visit all the time and call every day and no matter how far apart you are, I still love you so much."

Mike was out of breath from his speech, breathing in and out while El just smiled. She wrapped her hands around his neck and kissed him, putting all her emotions into the kiss. It was light and slow and she pulled away saying just one thing, "I love you too."

It was quiet for a few minutes until El spoke up again, "Are you excited for college?"

"I guess so. It's gonna be really weird. It's kinda scary, but I'm happy. It's new, so I guess I just gotta hope it's a good kind of new."

El understood that all too well. She knew what it was like to be put in a place completely different from everything she'd ever known, and for her, it was the greatest thing that happened to her. She hoped that college would be a good change for all of them.

"I'm not really going to miss high school. I love you and the boys and all, but I don't think Hawkins is everything the world has for me. I don't think that for you either."

El was silent. She never really thought about leaving Hawkins. It was all she'd ever known, she never thought about the rest of the world. Hawkins had become her little corner of the world and she couldn't understand the desire to leave. She had her family, her friends, Mike. But life doesn't work like that, you can't always have everything you want in one little spot. She was growing up, her world was going to have to get bigger.

Maybe Mike was right, Hawkins shouldn't be her entire world. She had the people she loved here, but she couldn't deny she had some pretty terrible memories as well. Maybe Hawkins wasn't her home, maybe her home was wherever the people she cared about were. Right now that was Hawkins, but in September that would all change. The four people she loved most were all leaving, and instead of wishing they should stay home, maybe she should just broaden her

idea of home.

Mike saw her getting lost in thought, “El-”

“I don't care if I'm in Hawkins or any other place. I just want all of us to be together.”

“We will be, even if college makes that a little difficult, it's really not that long. We've got our entire futures. We're gonna be together our entire lives El, in the end it won't be a big deal if we spend a few years a little far apart.”

El smiled, a real smile this time, finally feeling better. Mike may be leaving in September, but that didn't mean anything was changing. He was just going to be a little farther away.

She grabbed his hand and he gave a reassuring squeeze.

They listened to each other's breathing for a few minutes in silence. Then Mike said something El never expected.

“This might be the last time I'm ever in here.”

El looked at him, not knowing what to say.

“It's just weird. I used to be in this room every single day. I had class and listened to Mr. Clarke and it was just an ordinary part of my day. I never thought that it wouldn't last forever. It was my life, I didn't seem to think it would ever change.”

“Are you going to miss it?” El asked cautiously.

“I don't know. Middle school was a long time ago, I didn't really like it. But I loved this room. I don't think I'll miss it, but I'm always going to love this place.”

“What's your favorite memory here?”

“That's an easy question. The Snow Ball, when we snuck out of the gym and came in here. I kissed you,” He looked down for a moment, “I think that's when I realized I love you.” Mike was hiding off a faint blush, it had been almost 5 years but he still loved the memory.

El was giving a bashful smile and reached over to give him a quick peck.

“Mine too.”

Mike looked around the room, taking in all the memories. El thought this day was hard for her, but she was just scared of everyone moving away. Mike was walking away from 12 years of memories. She couldn't imagine the nostalgia.

Suddenly Mike laughed, “Did I ever tell you the story of when Dustin accidentally set a fire with the Bunsen Burner? No one got hurt or anything, but he was screaming and flipping out over this tiny flame it was hilarious. He got in so much trouble, Mr. Clarke had to lecture him on lab safety, but even he was laughing while doing it.”

El cracked and smile which turned into a big laugh. They sat there a while, Mike sharing all his favorite stories from school. El had heard some of them before, but she didn't dare tell him that. She listened and laughed like it was the very first time.

They must have been there for over an hour, and when Mike finally ran out of stories the two just sat there, smiling and still holding each other's hands.

Mike's thumb was rubbing circles on El's hand, still laughing at his last story.

“I love this place, I really do. I'm gonna miss it. But I'm gonna love college just as much, and after college I'm gonna love whatever I do then, as long as I've got you and the boys by my side.”

El squeezed his hand, “Well you definitely have me.”

There was a moment of silence while Mike looked down at his watch, “We should go, my mom's probably flipping out.”

“Are you ready to leave?”

Mike hadn't expected that question, but as he looked around and his eyes settled on El's face he knew the answer.

“Yeah, just one more thing.”

El looked on with curiosity when Mike pulled out his house keys. He brought the edge down onto the desk and started to carve something.

When he was done El looked down at the small little M + E scratched into the wood.

“I'm ready now,” he looked at her.

She smiled and grabbed his hand, and together they walked out of the room.

Author's Note:

I do not promote the vandalism of school property

Leave kudos/comments if you liked!